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*Everlyne Chebet*

Ph.D Student Kisii University

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# Mother Tongue Usage and Classroom Instruction. Does influence of teachers Attitude Matter? Evidence from Kenya

Everlyne Chebet

Ph.D Student Kisii University

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## Abstract

Mother tongue/first language-based education system with adequate teachers and learning resource materials. The policy of language in Kenya emphasizes on the importance of first language; teachers overlook everyday reality of its usage, and tend to be irrelevant to their needs. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of teacher's attitude on classrooms instruction. A descriptive survey research design

was used. Target population was 4 Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO), 200 head teachers and 400 teachers from 200 ECDE centres in the county. The sample size was 241 respondents, these were; 4 QASOs, 79 head teachers and 158 pre-school teachers. The study used purposive sampling technique to select seventy nine head teachers and four Sub County QASOs. The study used simple random sampling technique to select 158 teachers from the sampled schools. The instruments for data collection were interviews and questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered to the pre-school teachers, while Sub County Quality assurance officers and head teachers were interviewed. The instruments were piloted in Kericho County that had similar characteristics as the study area. The reliability of research instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings indicated that teacher attitude was a positive influence on mother tongue/first language usage in classroom instruction. The study recommended that the government should support in-service training for pre-school teachers on the use of mother tongue/first language as a language of instruction; provide funds for the development and acquisition of L1 resources for teaching that ensures schools comply with the language policy.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

According to UN Habitat, 1948 education creates a positive advancement on human beings and attempts to make it available to each one of the individuals who require change. The function of language as a medium of instruction has involved numerous researchers everywhere throughout the world for a long time (Deyi, Simon, Ngcobo and Thole 2007). Language is an arrangement of words or signs that individuals use to express ideas and emotions to each other. Therefore, mother tongue/first language is a child's first language; the language is learned from the elder relatives (UNESCO, 2003). Buckley (2003) attests that children encounter a gap between their first language and the second language utilized used in school. In this idea the mother tongue/first language ends up inane and might be strange in the

classroom.

Learning mother tongue/first language inside the initial five years of a kid's life is one of the indicators of a kid's later performance in school (Cummins,

2000). Language is a methods for correspondence through which individuals express their want, thoughts, energies, happiness, disillusionments and transfers of data. Language is an instrument for considering idea advancement in children. Kids think and talk in a language that is commonplace to them. Language is a vehicle for a wide range of sorts of learning.

The language function as a mode for instruction is an issue on many parts of the world where immigrant kids are marginal, for instance, Canada and United States (Dey et al., 2007). As kids learn their mother tongue/first language, they likewise learn ideas and scholarly expertise that are similarly important to

their capacity to function in the school language. African nations have a larger part of its kids experiencing an education framework that occasionally neglects to give guidelines in the language they talk at home which they comprehend better. This may have added to absence of education and results in individuals joining workforce with inadequate abilities (UNESCO, 2003).

The importance of mother tongue/first language in intellectual, semantic, individual and educational advancement of children can't be overemphasized. Out of this acknowledgment UNESCO proclaimed the year 2006 the year of African languages. According to UNESCO (1953) mother tongue/first language is the language which a child secures in early years and which ordinarily turns into their instrument of thought and communication. Kenya institutes of education (2000) (KICD), characterizes mother tongue/first language as the principal language a child is relied upon to utilize or the language of the school catchment zone. As indicated by UNESCO, (1968) mother tongue/first language education is instruction which utilizes its medium of instruction utilizing a man's primary language that is the language a person/child has obtained in early years and which regularly has turned into his/her normal instrument of thought and communication (Kobia, 2007).

When mother tongue/first language is advanced in the school, it helps to develop not only the mother tongue/first language but also children's abilities in the majority school language. According Skutuab (2000) bilingual kids perform better in schools when the school adequately educates the mother tongue/first language and where suitable, creates proficiency in that language. In contrast when children are urged to dismiss their primary language, its advancement stagnates their own and applied establishment for learning is undermined. Spending instructional time using mother tongue/first language in the school doesn't influence kids' scholastic improvement in the school language. Cummins (2000) affirm that as per investigate, discoveries, very much actualized bilingual projects can advance proficiency and topic learning in mother tongue/first language with no negative impact on kids' improvement in the school language.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The medium of instruction in the formative years of a child is crucial as it offers many advantages of ensuring smooth transition from home to the school environment for young learners joining school for the first time. According to (Session paper NO.14 of 2012) the Kenyan language policy, teaching and

learning in formative stages of the child has to be done using the language of the catchment area. The language policy in Kenya lays down strict limits on how language should be used.

However, many trainers/teachers in schools in Nandi County use the second language (Kiswahili/L2) right away on the onset of the education which disconnects the learner and the teacher from classroom instruction. The learners cognitive development is hindered and slowed hence transition cannot be systematic from L1 to L2 (Benson, 2004). Most children in several cases become frustrated and may drop out of school because of lack of understanding the medium of instruction which interrupts learning. In the sixth year of assessing children basic literacy and numeracy skills, Uwezo Kenya Assessment Report (2016) found out that children are not learning as they should be. On average, 30% of class three pupils cannot do class two works while 8% of pupils in class eight cannot do the same work. This leaves majority of the stakeholders wondering how learners transit from one level to another without acquiring literacy skills and the concepts that support learning. This, therefore, made the researcher to establish the influence of teachers' attitude towards usage of mother tongue as a medium instruction among ECDE Centres in Nandi County, Kenya.

## Objective of the Study

The study aims to explore the influence of teachers' attitude on mother tongue usage among ECDE centers classroom instruction in Nandi County, Kenya.

### 1.5 Research Questions

Does teacher's attitude influence mother tongue usage in classroom instruction among the rural ECDE centres in Nandi County Kenya?

## Review of Literature

### Teachers' Attitude towards the Usage of Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction

Primary language/first language based instruction is the heading a child's first language (L1) takes, when in doubt with an engineered dynamic move to a (L2) or outside vernacular at a predefined time in audit school. This generally speaking happens just in the language most clearly comprehended to the understudy. Children have the chance to learn center contemplations by and large in an obvious tongue, and later, they take in the vocabulary for those considerations in another vernacular. This structure should be related before preschool and the lower elementary school classes (up to audit three). This

has, anyway not been master as schools have been utilizing L2 perfect from preschool finding distinctive illuminations behind not clinging to the L1 approach. This has impelled the method creators to reemphasize the L1 approach.

Kenyans are generally either bilingual or, multilingual (Beyond any vulnerability and Webb, 2000). L2 has the most stunning status in Kenya as it is connected with the world class and those working in formal business. In formal settings, both L2 and Kiswahili are generally utilized. Close-by indigenous lingos are much of the time utilized as a bit of nice settings. In urban settings, Sheng a tongue code comprehended with the energetic is in addition utilized. This is a blend of vernacular, Kiswahili and L2 and is utilized as a character marker among the pre-grown-up. It is essentially lexicalized and its oath reference is fundamentally just comprehensible to a couple in-get-together individuals to whom it is a capable character marker while it rejects the general population who don't have any associate with it. Beginning in the mid-2000s in the ghetto zones of Nairobi (Ogechi, 2005), Sheng is getting reputation transversely completed social classes even to neighboring nations. Pros of Kenyan planning have anyway guaranteed that Sheng is a stunning impact to instruction imparting that its impact is an essential wellspring of repulsive execution in Swahili and L2 among children (Momanyi, 2009). The Service of Instruction credited the poor results posted in the L2 Subject in the 2013 KCSE exams to the utilization of Sheng, among different reasons.

The utilization of L2 and its capacities can be taken after back to Kenya's explorer period. The instructors, in a joint effort with the voyager government, were the chief suppliers of Western-style planning (Bunyi 2009). L2 had a basic part as the language of the ace and the tongue of affiliation. Kiswahili, in any case, had since quite a while back settled itself in various parts of the East African float as a postponed outcome of exchange between the Bantu-talking parties, raising the issue of what language was to be utilized as the medium of bearing, at what level it was to be natural and who was qualified with demonstrate it (Langat, 2005). The evangelists maintained the vernacular and strengthened by the soundness that 'Africa would be changed over by Africa' (Abdulaziz, 2002), they deciphered the Book of sacrosanct writings and other Christian creation into the region tongues. L2 remained the language of evangelists, executives and the European pioneer ranchers (Muthwii, & Kioko, 2001).

Beginning at now the L2 tongue acknowledge a key

part in Kenya's honest to goodness, cash related and getting ready structure (Michieka, 2005). In setting it up, isn't just a single of the essential subjects in the informational modules yet is itself the medium of run the show. It is anyway evaluated that lone 16% of Kenyans know L2 as a minute vernacular (Beyond any vulnerability and Webb, 2000). Speakers of L2 fundamentally live in the urban locale of the nation. L2 is up 'til now a marker of higher budgetary class and there is a sensible association between's ability in L2 and the measure of years one has spent in the planning structure, since school opens individuals to more L2 (Bunyi, 2009).

In the Kenya constitution, the issue of vernacular is obviously verbalized as to 'Advance and assurance the different attributes of tongues of the general open of Kenya (and to) drive the change and use of indigenous lingos, Kenyan flag based correspondence, Braille and other correspondence affiliations and headways available to individuals with obstacle's (Section 2, article 7, policys 3a and 3b). The Kenya constitution in the interim holds Kiswahili and L2 as the national lingos, a sign of its help for multilingualism. (The Kenya Constitution 2010 Section 2, Article 7).

Thus, language educators are presented to, prove from the discoveries that the esteem set on L2 in connection to Mother tongue/first language by teachers has a heading on the demeanor they have towards Mother tongue/first language and L2. Pastry specialist (2002) calls attention to that 'The status esteem and significance of a language is frequently and for the most part effortlessly ... estimated by demeanors to the language. From the educators' reactions, Mother tongue/first language is dismissed for its absence of instrumental inspirations while L2 is favored for the two its instrumental and integrative inspirations. In this paper, educators' inclination for L2 is in acknowledgment of its utilitarian and also its monetary esteem. Thus they are roused to utilize L2 for guideline and to need their learners to utilize it. Then again they dismiss Mother tongue/first language and would need to discourage pupils from utilizing it due to its absence of utilitarian and monetary focal points.

The suppositions of teachers on languages through which pupils think that it's less demanding to learn yielded the accompanying outcomes: Over portion of the respondents concurred that pupils thought that it was less demanding to learn through Mother tongue/first language some of them concurred that pupils thought that it was less demanding to learn through L2 and greater part of the respondents concurred that pupils thought that it was simpler to

learn through Kiswahili. This clarifies why most of the lessons are led in Kiswahili. On regardless of whether comprehension and accomplishment would be improved if Mother tongue/first language were utilized as a medium of guideline and studies were set in it, a significant number of them firmly couldn't help contradicting the announcement and some oppose this idea. A modest number emphatically concurred and a couple of concurred as less still were undecided. It hence takes after that most of the educators differ that if Mother tongue/first language were utilized as a medium of instruction and studies were set in it, student's comprehension and accomplishment would be improved. In any case it ought to be noticed that most of the respondents appeared to have a predisposition for Kiswahili and L2 subsequently their reactions might not have been objective.

The educators' demeanors towards Mother tongue/first language were negative as they didn't see it as a fitting medium for guideline. Be that as it may, Mother tongue/first language still highlighted amid classroom guideline and was likewise instructed as a subject. Krashen's (2005) hypothesis of information theory which advises this study can best clarify the circumstance of Mother tongue/first language as a subject and a language of instruction. Krashen states that language procurement just happens when the student is presented to intelligible information. This contribution, as per Ellis (2005), might be as talked or composed language. He contends that 'In spite of the fact that the student should be a dynamic member during the time spent language securing, he is additionally reliant on the arrangement of understandable info'. In the event that the teachers on whom the pupils are reliant for arrangement of Mother tongue/first language content (which will shape the understandable info) have a negative state of mind towards the language, at that point they are not in a situation to utilize the

Table 3.1: Target Population

Respondents	Target population
QASO Officers	4
Head teachers	200
ECDE Teachers	400
Total	604

Source: (D.E.O Office, 2017)

### Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Sampling is a procedure of selecting a sample from a population as representative of that population (Orodho, 2008). Simple random sampling technique was used to select **ECDE centres** to take part in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to

best methods for guideline in Mother tongue/first language to guarantee the supply of intelligible contribution to the pupils consequently Mother tongue/first language is stifled for absence of conceivable information.

### Research Methodology

#### Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design that involves gathering data by describing events (Glass & Hopkins, 2004). Descriptive methods are widely used to obtain data useful in evaluating present practices and providing for decision. Further, the designs are applicable in research to generate knowledge. This design was appropriate because it described how the use of mother tongue/first language influences the pupil's classroom instruction in ECDE centres in Nandi County.

#### Study Area

The study area for this study was Nandi County. Compared with other counties in the country the county enjoys moderate weather in terms of rainfall and temperatures. The county was believed provides a wide and varied view of the problem under research hence the area was suitable for this study. The inhabitants were selected to determine the mother tongue/first language based language implementation in ECDE classroom instruction. Furthermore the area was chosen because no similar study has been done in the study area. Thus, inhabitants gave a wide and varied view of the problem under study.

#### Target Population

The researcher targeted 4 QASO Officers, 200 head teachers and 400 teachers from 200 **ECDE** centres in the county as shown in table 3.1.

select 79 head teachers and 4 Zonal QASOs. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain 158 **pre-school** teachers from the sampled schools.

According to Gay (2003) a minimum sample of 20% is adequate for research when a target population is less than 1000 members. Sample size was calculated using Yamane formula ( $n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$ )



Where;

n= the sample size

N = the size of population

e= the error of 5 percent

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

$$n = N / (1 + 1.515)$$

$$n = 604 / 2.515$$

$$= 241$$

The sample size was 241 respondents. This is as shown in table 3.1.

**Table 3.2: Sample Size**

Respondents	Target population	Sample size
QASO Officers	4	4
Head teachers	200	79
ECDE Teachers	400	158
Total	604	241

Source: Author, (2017)

### Research Instruments

This study adopted questionnaire and interview schedule as main research instruments.

### Questionnaire

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a questionnaire is an instrument that gathers data over a large sample. The researcher was able to collect information from various schools over a short period of time. The main reason questionnaire was chosen is because they are free from biasness.

### Interview Schedule

Orodho (2008) proposed that numerous individuals will convey orally than in composing and they would give information more promptly and completely than on a survey. As per Kumar (2006), the upside of utilizing structured interview is the level of deficient surveys is lessened.

### Validity and Reliability of the research instrument

As indicated by Paton (2002) validity is quality ascribed to recommendation or measures of how much they fit in with buildup learning or truth. As indicated by (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2008) the

reliability is the measure of steady consequences of an instrument after a retest. Before the genuine information was gathered, the scientist led a pilot contemplate in Kericho County among 20 head teachers. The reason for the pilot study is that it empowers the analyst to determine the reliability and validity of the instruments, and to acquaint her with the organization of the polls and in this way enhance the instruments and methods.

### Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation Gender of Respondents

The gender of pre-school teachers who participated in the study was varied as summarized in Table 4.1. Sixty three (63.7%) were female while 53 (36.3%) were male. This showed that majority of the pre-school teachers were females, thus there was gender disparity in the distribution of pre-school teachers in Nandi County. This may be credited to the aversion of the male educators to take up pre-school showing parts which may appear to them to be female. This avows earlier investigates that most pre-educators or by and large called supervisors were generally women since they could manage children and give them love, care, thought and diverse necessities (Rotumoi and Too, 2012).

**Table 4.1 Gender of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	53	36.3	36.3
Female	93	63.7	100.0
Total	146	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

### Age of Respondents

The age of the pre-school teachers involved in the study was varied as shown in table 4.2. Of pre-school teachers 47(32.2%) were aged between 41 and 50 years, however 64 (43.8%) of them aged

between 31 and 40 years and 35(24%) above 51 years. These study demonstrate that majority of the pre-teachers were beneath 50 years and might be productive in utilizing native language in classroom instruction in ECDE focuses in Nandi County. This was upheld by Githinji (2008) who noticed that the

age of the teachers decides the kinds of instructing techniques to be utilized. The youthful teachers can help pupils on utilization of first language in classroom guideline yet not the normal gauges since dominant part may need comprehension of the local language dissimilar to elderly teachers who are acquainted with the local language. Githinji (2008)

additionally found that larger part of pre-teachers was matured underneath 50 years. The age of any team in the general public is extremely essential since it demonstrates the quality and shortcomings of the human asset which is regularly a measure of performance in arrangement of administrations required.

Table 4.2 Age of Respondents

Age Brackets	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
31-40 years	64	43.8	43.8
41-50 years	47	32.2	76.0
Over 51 years	35	24.0	100.0
Total	146	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

### Education Level of Respondents

This study sought to establish the highest education level of the respondents as presented in Table 4.3. Majority of the pre-school teachers 74 (50.7%) had diploma in Early Childhood Education, with 24% had bachelor's degree and 20.5% had pre education level. The study show that all pre-teachers in the selected schools had important expert training and would have the capacity to give data on the part of primary language in classroom guideline. The training level of the teachers impacts their capacity to embrace and utilize first language use in classroom guideline consequently affecting pupils' securing of the second language (Car and Mitchel, 2009).

Kids in classroom educated by teachers with aptitudes connected to higher level of training particularly in early youth advancement have a higher self-assurance and invest more energy in objective coordinated exercises and have a higher capacity to impact pre-school pupils on native language use in classroom instruction for compelling administration conveyance (National Initiative of Early Education Research, 2003).

4.3 Highest Professional Qualification of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Primary	7	4.8		4.8
Pre	30	20.5		25.3
Tertiary college	74	50.7		76.0
University	35	24.0		100.0
Total	146	100.0		

Source: Field Data (2017)

### Teaching Experience of Respondents

The more a teacher is experienced the more he or she knows the part of first language in classroom instruction. The showing knowledge of pre-teachers was differed, as appeared in the table 4.4. Thirty nine (39.7%) of the pre-teachers had in the vicinity of 5 and 8 years showing background, with 34.9% having in the vicinity of 3 and 5 years. Sixty six (45.6%) had 9 years showing background and the slightest had over 25 years. The study demonstrated

that a large portion of the pre-teachers had underneath 5 years instructing knowledge. This demonstrates teachers with numerous times of showing background are more compelling in classroom instruction which is upheld Americas Center for Education (2005) which demonstrated that the level of teacher's experience associates emphatically with pupils' scholastic accomplishment and teachers were observed to be more successful in classroom conveyance.

Table 4.4 Teacher Experience

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 3 years	25	17.1	17.1
3-5 years	51	34.9	52.1
5-8 years	58	39.7	91.8

over 9 years	12	8.2	100.0
Total	146	100.0	

Source: Field Data (2017)

### Teachers Attitude towards Mother Tongue/First Language Usage and Classroom Instruction

The study sought to establish the influence of

Teachers Attitude towards Mother Tongue/First Language Usage and Classroom Instruction on ECDE classroom among the rural ECDE centres in Nandi County as shown below

**Table 4.5 Role of attitude in the implementation MT in instruction**

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
The teachers teaching in MT progressively provide assignments to learners to be done outside classroom environment	25	17.1	66	45.2	12	8.2	28	19.2	15	10.3
Teachers perform poorly in classroom instructions because they lack proficiency in second language.	0	0.0	65	44.5	15	10.3	25	17.1	41	28.1
If pupils are conversant in L1 they can perform well in literacy skills	0	0.0	66	45.2	14	9.6	66	45.2	0	0.0
Teachers advocate and practice MT instruction,	0	0.0	66	45.2	0	0.0	53	36.3	27	18.5
Learners have difficulties in translating concepts acquired in L1 into L2.	40	27.4	0	0.0	26	17.8	66	45.2	14	9.6
The provision of learning resources in the first language makes teaching easier and promotes the possibility of parents involvement in their children	3	2.1	49	33.6	6	4.1	44	30.1	44	30.1
The attitude of the locals do not support the implementation of the language policy despite teacher's knowledge on its benefits	29	19.9	26	17.8	0	0.0	40	27.4	51	34.9
Teachers who use L1 in class are viewed as unlearned	3	2.1	3	2.1	40	27.4	40	27.4	60	41.1
Parents regularly follow their children's' progress in school.	29	19.9	6	4.1	50	34.2	16	11.0	45	30.8
The teachers who ignore the use of L2 do not expect much from of their learners	53	36.3	0	0.0	37	25.3	13	8.9	43	29.5
Mother tongue as a medium of instruction should be used in pre-school and ECDE(lower primary)	23	15.8	26	17.8	14	9.6	45	30.8	38	26.0
The use of L1 in classroom promotes identity and culture of the community	37	25.3	3	2.1	25	17.1	40	27.4	41	28.1



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